

# WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB LIMITED

## NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1996



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### \*\*\*\* EDITORIAL \*\*\*\*

I've attended quite a few rallies this year already and the difference in the organising (or rather the lack of it) is amazing. How organisers of major rallies have the same problem year after year without doing something about it is beyond belief. On arriving at the Abbey Hill Steam Rally at 8.30 on the Saturday morning all the space allocated for engines was full. The engine steward was running around trying to find room, one exhibitor had his caravan with two cars parked alongside, taking up the space of three engines, on being asked to move the cars I was able to get my engine into the engine line. Other exhibitors were still arriving and the stewards had to make another engine line at the other end of the site. Surely engine stewards know how many engines they have booked in and how many spaces are needed. Exactly the same thing happened at the Selwood Rally at Rode, I arrived at 8.30 on the Saturday morning, guess what, no room, we were relegated to a very sloping site miles away from the main engine display. This is the second year running this has happened, will they never learn? The largest culprit for compounding this problem is the "large caravan, small engine exhibitor." He always has the largest caravan, awning, toilet tent, large 4x4 vehicle, and after taking up about 4 engine spaces plonks a small motor mower engine in front as an exhibit, this very seldom runs. This type of exhibitor should be discouraged from attending rallies and directed to the nearest Caravan Camping site.

### CLUB NIGHT 29TH APRIL - TALK BY JOE POWELL ON LISTER & GENERAL ENGINEERING.

A good crowd turned up to hear Joe Powell's talk on Lister engineering and he has had quite an engineering life working for Listers. I think I heard correctly when he said he started in 1920 making needles for carburettors. He had cast some wheels for model railway engines and when these were seen by Listers he was told if he could make wheels like that he would do for them, he never managed to make anymore. In the first session some slides were shown of the Lister family, there were several of them working at Listers, the M.D. being Sir Ashton Lister and some slides of the workforce showed Joe Powell's father in the group. A large Garret engine was installed to drive various things and it seems it was nothing but trouble and Listers did not ever forgive Garret for that. They bought the Auto-truck which was being made in Norton St. Philip and developed it into many uses, one of which was a fire truck. I don't know if it was any good though. Listers found it very useful in the factory for carrying things about and although it may sound surprising most were fitted with I.A.P. engines. We had a break halfway through and the raffle was held, several prizes, all donated, thank you very much, hint-hint, were won. That basket holding the fruit will eventually have been taken home and returned by everyone in the Club. I wonder if it will last. After the break more slides were shown including one of an Austin seven, his first car. I don't know if the slide was of his car or one like it, I could not hear all that well as I was sitting almost out of the room. There were a lot of slides of various parts of the factory and machinery, health and safety came last on the list of factory improvements it seems, things must have been whirling around everywhere.

The evening ended with thanks to Joe Powell and everyone had learned quite a bit about what life was like as an engineer in the midish 20th century.

VIC WALTON.

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\*\*\*\* CLUB CHARACTERS \*\*\*\*  
NO. 4 - BILL COOMBES.

Bill Coombes lives high up on Mendip and confesses that he has always had an interest in mechanical things. His father had a Denning sawbench driven by a 3 h.p. Amanco engine which Bill at the age of twelve was sometimes allowed to start up. However, the danger of circular saws and machinery generally was instilled in him by his father who would not allow him to saw wood until some years later. In 1960 he acquired a Willys Jeep which he ran around a friend's farm, thus finding out the high cost of petrol. To offset this, he added a small tank for petrol starting, and a two-way tap and ran the Jeep on TVO, heating the fuel by winding the fuel pipe around the exhaust manifold. Later on, and married with his own home, he made up his own saw bench unit, flat-belted with a Petter AVA1 diesel and currently uses a similar unit, a Petter PH1 with vee-belt drive to a Bamford saw.

This early interest in engines resulted in being introduced to the Wessex Stationary Engine Club Ltd. in 1982, eventually doing a spell on the committee for some years. He says "I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the Club and quickly caught the engine collecting bug. I saw a partly dismantled 1941 Lister Junior for sale in our Newsletter and soon purchased, painted and assembled it, at the same time making my first engine trolley to mount it on. I then started on an 1923 Lister Junior which was not only seized in the cylinder but the crankshaft was seized on to the main bearing. A friendly neighbour offered to make the caged exhaust valve elbow for it, (the original was broken in two), and it turned out an A1 job. Since then he has been a great help to me. I have also had an immense amount of help and advice from Wessex members over the years, that's what a Club is all about in my opinion. A good example is the advice given me by Bill Appleby who told me how to jack the cylinder off the Lister A to free the piston - it worked.

I have about fourteen engines in my collection, some restored, some unrestored and some not even runners. An interesting find was a Burnard water pump, made in London, which I have restored but cannot find anything out about. My wife Violet, is very supportive of the hobby and helps me in the workshop and at rallies. I made a winch out of scrap jockey leg from a lorry trailer, driven by an electric motor in order to pull my engines up the steep slope to my workshop. It saves Vi and me a lot of struggling. In my workshop I have a very old lathe which I have cleaned up and put to use, a wood planer, and a nice old grindstone which would also make a rally exhibit. Having just finished my Petter M, I am contemplating setting it up with a generator as I have two or three to choose from. I am quite useless with electrics but have much help from Ivor Yeo who can soon sort out my problems."

Bill enjoys restoration and obviously does most of it himself whenever possible, however he readily admits that specialist jobs need outside help. When the restoration of the 3 h.p. Amanco required paint-lining, he was lucky to have a specialist in the village, right on his doorstep, who was most helpful. He tries to keep his rallying local as there is not much fun in driving long distances, he finds it tiring. His other hobbies are atalking, shooting and 'backstreet engineering' - anything to do with metalwork. Nevertheless, having had the opportunity some years ago to buy a piece of land at the rear of his cottage, he is proud of his first attempt at building, having added a large kitchen extension and an equally large engine shed/workshop. He regards this as an ongoing project, in between engine, and says it will keep him occupied for many years to come. He instigated and organised the popular Tencrest rallies which ran for some years next to the Mendip Inn and which now, sadly, have lapsed into memory. They were pleasant, informal and raised quite an amount of money for the Cancer and Leukemia in Childhood Trust. Living fairly close to the Old Down Inn Bill is a regular attender at Club meetings and he hopes to have involvement with the Wessex for many years to come.  
EMERSON BRANTINGHAM.

\*\*\*CONGRATULATIONS\*\*\* to Club members John and Margaret Freeman of Bournemouth on their recent marriage. The Wessex Club would like to wish you the very best for the future, and a very long and happy marriage.

\*\*\*OBITUARY\*\*\* The Wessex Stationary Engine Club are saddened by the recent death of Andrew Wines of Coleford. He was a member for many years, not seen on the rally field but always supported the Coleford Fundays, our condolences to his family and friends.

\*\*\*NEW MEMBERS\*\*\* The Wessex Stationary Engine Club would like to welcome the following new members:- Charlie Moore from Midsomer Norton, Andrew House of Glastonbury and Richard McGill of Market Lavington, may their association with our club be a long and happy one.



\*\*\*\* ANOTHER LITTLE SOMETHING \*\*\*

AS REQUESTED BY BRIAN BAKER, FROM THE WILTSHIRE MOONRAKER.

A trip by luxurious coach to Brighton to see the historic commercial vehicle run from London on the 5th May, 1996 organised by the Wessex Model & Collectors Club at Trowbridge. Yes another early start leaving Trowbridge old bus station at 7 a.m. sharp, up to Warminster to pick up more passengers. We had one coffee stop just after 9 a.m., arriving at Brighton at 10.30 with a cold breeze blowing off the sea. A few vehicles have now started to arrive all restored to a very high standard. Vans, light lorries, open and enclosed cab fire appliances, buses and coaches single and double-deck passenger vehicles, military vehicles, purpose built taxi-cabs, steam wagons and tractors. In all about two hundred vehicles took part in the years run. There are too many vehicles to mention them all. When many of them were built, mass production as such was unknown, and many parts were machined by hand - the factories of yesteryear bearing little resemblance to the production lines of today. All being part of the English Heritage. To any member of the Wessex Stationary Engine Club that has the Old Glory magazine May 1996 the excellent restoration of the Leyland X2 Omnibus this the oldest British built bus in existence, and took part and finished in this years run. This was restoration at the very best, built in 1908 fitted with the Crossley 35/40 h.p. four cylinder engine with low tension ignition, fitted with a 34 seater body, 16 inside, 18 outside built by Thomas Tilling.

Other vehicles of interest being one from Shepton Mallet a 1951 Morris commercial LC3 van - 2050cc this was used as a project to re-train unemployed men for new skills and the restoration was completed in the spring of 1995. 1938 Berna 2us tilt lorry. 5320cc an ex-Swiss Army 3.5 ton truck with a four cylinder diesel engine this also has a heated double glazed windscreen. 1917 Autocar lorry 18 h.p. this was one of 460 purchased from the U.S.A. during World War I by the British Army this is the only survivor. 1965 Scania Vabis L36 lorry 5200cc this is an ex-Swedish Army model. 1942 Federal timber tractor. 85 h.p. This was built for the U.S. Army it now has a Gardner 5 L.W. engine fitted in 1966.

When the sun came out we went on an open topped bus for a trip around Brighton, this was the best way to see this very Victorian town with very steep hills. We also walked out on the very long pier and looked back at the seaside town from the end of the pier it looked quite nice. This was a very enjoyable day out with nice fish and chips, we have to catch the coach at 6 p.m. for the three hour trip home.

BOB HALLAM.

#### MONTHLY CLUB MEETING Monday 20th May.

On this evening a talk was given by club member Ted Phillips under the heading of 'Job Description of a Justice of the Peace' the position of which Ted held for some 25 years or more, although he now has recently retired. He has served on the bench in Frome, Wells, Shepton Mallet and Glastonbury and it seems that during this time he has visited most of the prisons from Bristol to Dartmoor and around.

Club members were invited to stop and ask questions at any time throughout the talk as many did. The first half took about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour we then stopped for a break to fill our glasses and to do the raffle, the winners being Marg Appleby - 4 cans of beer, Dennis Hodges - bottle of wine, a basket of fruit for Brian Reakes and Colin Nicholson a tin of Wherther Sweets.

We then continued the second half when more questions were asked and answered by example using the person who submitted the question as a hyperthetical law-breaker this caused some considerable amusement at times. Speed cameras were of great interest especially as they have been installed in the village of Chilcompton which many of our club members have to pass through on there way to the club - the road Ted would also have travelled at 30 mph!! Also questions about fines for burglary, road traffic offences and T.V. licences etc. and did you know that if you run a video recorder with a black and white television you need a colour television licence????????

All in all it was a very interesting and enlightening talk with some humorous stories in between and although it was nothing to do with stationary engines, I think it is good to have a completely different subject from time to time.

Members attendance was slightly down but it was thought that some may not have remembered that the meeting was one week early this month because of the Bank Holiday and I know that three committee members, including myself had had to be reminded of this point the day before the meeting.

The meeting closed just after 10 o'clock. Many thanks were given to Ted by our chairman B.J.B.  
J.J. LAMBERT.

BOOK REVIEW - "A PATH TO THE DOOR" by KENNETH D'MAURNEY GIBBONS.

Published by Alan Sutton Ltd in conjunction with Lister-Petter Ltd.

This book will appeal not only to enthusiasts of engines but to those interested in aircraft, motoring and engineering history in general. It sets out to chronicle the story of the Petter family, their lives, industries and inventions over a span of one hundred years, and it does so in an easy to read style illustrated by 150 photographs. For the engine enthusiast in particular, there is a section devoted to engine model ranges and their dates of manufacture. Certainly it is a book not to be missed by the serious Petter collector, indeed for those interested in other makes this could be the book by which to judge all others. It is a perfect companion to 'Lister - the First Hundred Years' by David Evans, now sadly out of print and already commanding high prices on the secondhand market. Having read and reread it, I can only suggest that purchasing a copy could well be an equally good investment for the future. Those of us who were at the two Great Gatherings of Engines at Longleat run by the Stationary Engine Magazine some years ago will remember the author as being on the Petter display stand handing out tee-shirts bearing the Petter logo to all those who had entered a Petter engine. It is difficult in a few lines to describe the contents of book covering so many aspects of such a large company but suffice it to say that it starts with the move from Barnstaple to Yeovil by the Petter family, setting up a family ironmongery business, and passing it over to the now famous Petter twin brothers, Percy and (later Sir) Ernest who were born in 1873. The brothers were most innovative, making anything from grate and ovens to early motorcars. Another brother, Mr. Guy Petter, invented an early mechanical calculator which was highly acclaimed and sold well. Eventually it was found to be more lucrative to concentrate on engines following the successes with such products and their prowess in that field led on to was work, culminating in contracts to build aircraft. From there the firm of Westlands grew, with Mr., Teddy Petter designing the Whirlwind and Lysander, then working on the Folland Gnat and Canberra before taking monastic orders. The company eventually diverged into Westland aircraft and diesel engines, the latter is today under the Lister-Petter banner as part of the BTR Group. It is rather a shame that the captions to the photographs in such a book as this which is attempting to document history are not to be relied on. One example of this is a Petter 'B' type captioned as a diesel but clearly sporting a Solex carburettor; another is a Universal M-type captioned as having been made in 1924, but equipped with a Calibrater oiler which was not available on such models until the early 1930's. Perhaps more erudite readers will spot others. However this does not detract from an otherwise enjoyable book, published at the most reasonable price of £16.99. Oh, by the way...those of you intrigued by the title as I was, will have to purchase and read the book yourself to find out!

ERIC BRAIN.

\*\*\*\* FUTURE EVENTS \*\*\*\*

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| JULY 6th (SAT)     | 1 p.m. onwards. Grand Garden Fete at Burrington Combe. Engines wanted. For details contact Brian Reed.   |
| JULY 14th (SUN)    | Castle Cavalcade of Motoring, Cars, Commercials, Stationary Engines, Motorcycles, Tractors etc. Car Boot Sale. 11 a.m. onwards. Contact: Miss B. Laver, 'Cobblers Last' Market Place, Castle Cary, Som. BA7 7AG. |
| JULY 20/21st       | Somerset Traction Engine Rally at Low Ham, Langport.   |
| JULY 27/28th       | Sedgemoor Steam and Vintage Rally at Morganians Sports Ground, Bridgwater. For details ring (01278) 427418.  |
| AUGUST 3/4th       | Bishops Lydeard, Taunton.  |
| AUGUST 11th (SUN)  | Wessex Club Coach trip to Cardiff Docks complex. For details contact Jackie Lambert on Frome (01373) 463526.   |
| AUGUST 17/18th     | Yesterdays Farming, Manor Farm, Duckington, Ilminster. For details contact Ted Scott on (01823) 432379.  |
| AUGUST 17/18th     | Stanton Drew Steam Up, Curls Farm, Stanton Drew, Nr. Bristol. Contact B. Verrall on Cheddar (01934) 743460.  |
| AUGUST 25/26th     | Honiton Hill Rally, Nr. Honiton. Auction on Monday.  |
| AUGUST 28-31st     | The Great Dorset Steam Fair at Tarrant Hinton, Dorset.   |
| SEPTEMBER 1st      | Countryside Cavalcade, Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet.   |
| SEPTEMBER 14/15th  | Berwick St. John Country Fayre at Manor Farm, Berwick St. John. Contact: Sam Hacker on (01747) 830484.   |
| SEPTEMBER 28th     | Full Quart Crank-Up, Full Quart Inn, Hewish. Would previous exhibitors please ring Roy Cox on (01934) 419826 to secure their entry. All proceeds of this very popular event go to C.L.I.C.                       |
| OCTOBER 12th (SAT) | Wessex Stationary Club Social Evening. Skittle Match at Cheddar Football Club. 8 p.m. onwards. Grand Raffle, buffet supper. Contact Jackie Lambert on Frome (01373) 463526 to book your place.                   |